

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

7-6-00

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name **Noble-Seymour-Crippen House**  
other names/site number **Norwood Park Historical Society Museum**

**2. Location**

street & number **5622-5624 North Newark Avenue** \_\_\_\_\_ Not for publication  
city or town **Chicago** \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity  
state **Illinois** code **012** county **Cook** code **031** zip code **60631**

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Wheeler, SHP  
Signature of certifying official

7/5/00  
Date

**Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**

State or Federal agency and bureau  
In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
American Indian Tribe

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):	_____	_____

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#### 5. Classification

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##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

##### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   N/A  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

  N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**DOMESTIC/single dwelling**  
**DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling**  
**DOMESTIC/subsidiary**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum**

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**ITALIANATE**

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation **BRICK**

Roof **ASPHALT**

Walls **WOOD/weatherboard**

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**(See Continuation Sheets)**

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

**EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
SOCIAL HISTORY**

Period of Significance **1833-1920**

Significant Dates **1833, 1868, 1916**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Noble, Mark; Seymour, Thomas; Crippen, Stuart; Crippen, Charlotte**

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(See Continuation Sheet)

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository **Norwood Park Historical Society**

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property   1.7  

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	434110	4648095	___	___	___
2	___	___	___	___	___	___

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title            **Ted Hild**

organization        **Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**            date **April 24, 2000**

street & number    **One Old State Capitol Plaza**            telephone **217/785-4993**

city or town        **Springfield**            state **Illinois**            zip code **62701**

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:  
Continuation Sheets

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name                **Norwood Park Historical Society**

street & number    **5622 North Newark Avenue**            telephone **773/631-4633**

city or town        **Chicago**            state **Illinois**            zip code **60631**

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Noble-Seymour-Crippen House

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DESCRIPTION

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NOBLE-SEYMOUR-CRIPPEN HOUSE

Mark Noble built his house in 1833 and 1834. It was a one story, gable frame house on a brick foundation, roughly square in configuration. It probably had a basement. In 1868 Thomas Seymour added a two-story Italianate addition perpendicular to the axis of Noble's house. Seymour incorporated Noble's construction into a conventional late-nineteenth century floor plan. In 1916 Stuart and Charlotte Crippen took possession and over the next several decades, starting in the early 1920s, introduced a number of changes throughout the house. In 1998 the Norwood Park Historical Society, which acquired the property in 1988, began a two-year restoration program to return the house to its appearance in 1920.

SITE

The Noble-Seymour-Crippen house, at 5622-5624 North Newark Avenue in Chicago, sits on the crest of a sandy, north-south ridge, which is itself located on the elevated plain between the North Branch of the Chicago River and the Des Plaines River, eleven miles northwest from the center of Chicago's Loop. The primary elevation faces east, towards Chicago, providing a vista and once served as a safe spot to watch the Chicago Fire. The site encompasses a little more than four lots that were platted in 1915 and are all that remain from Mark Noble's original six hundred-acre purchase in the 1830s. The site is barely trapezoidal, roughly 210 feet wide and 320 feet deep. The house is set back about two hundred feet from Newark Avenue; the rear property line is about another one hundred feet behind the house.

The landscaping currently includes several large, old trees throughout, a hedge that shields views of neighboring houses along the south boundary and garden plots in the rear that are overgrown with ground cover, shrubs and scrub trees common to urban environments. A gravel drive enters the property from Newark Avenue, curves past the front of the house, then curves around the south end of the house and ends in a parking area in the rear. There are two garages in the rear that possess no significance and are discussed below.

Site integrity

Photographs from the 1920s suggest that the site changed very little since then, except for the natural growth and loss of plants and trees. The openness and arrangement of space remains the same. Since there was no plumbing in the house until 1916 or 1917, there would have been privies and, perhaps, other outbuildings associated with the household. Limited archaeological shovel testing revealed no evidence of the locations of any outbuildings. Although the house generally served as a residence, there

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was a period in the 1850s when the Brown family (see Section 8, below) operated the place as a farm. Consequently, there is a likelihood that a barn and other agricultural outbuildings existed. No evidence of any of these has been discovered, however. It is possible that outbuildings existed beyond the present property boundary.

NOBLE HOUSE

When Mark Noble erected the original structure on the property, it was a simple frame house with the gable ends measuring approximately twenty-five feet with sides approximately thirty feet long. Evidence in the framing indicates a main entrance in the center of the south-facing gable end with windows on either side facing what was then Talcott Road, the principal thoroughfare in the area. Structural evidence indicates two windows on each of the two long sides, but any evidence of windows on north gable end has been obliterated. There was a central fireplace with rooms arranged around it. White pine framing members rest on a foundation of handmade brick, which encloses a basement that is probably original.

Two doors in the middle of the exposed east basement wall are among the more interesting features surviving from the Noble period. Since an east-west brick wall divided the basement into north and south halves, these doors provide exits from each of the two halves of the basement. After construction of the northern section of the house, there was a curving brick wall in front of these doorways to a door in the newer foundation, providing passage between the two sections. The passageway may or may not have been covered with a roof before construction of the porch. Dangerously deflected and badly deteriorated, the wall failed during the recent restoration and will be rebuilt in the future.

SEYMOUR HOUSE

In 1868 Thomas Seymour built a two-story frame Italianate addition at the north end of Noble's house, which became the south wing of the Seymour House. The roof, on what is now the south wing, was raised several feet to insert a second floor that included round arched windows on the east, west and south facades. The original roof beams at the gable ends are still in place, having been integrated into the new roof system and retained in the course of the recent restoration. The south gable end wall was opened up to accommodate a frame summer kitchen measuring about eighteen feet square. The space was fitted out and used as a dining room to accommodate the large Seymour family. Wood casement windows at floor level together with an entry at the south end were installed on the east façade of the wing. A heavy Italianate frieze with paired brackets and panels ties the new construction to the old. There was a typical Italianate porch at the main entrance, but in the 1890s it was replaced with a deep,



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Noble-Seymour-Crippen House

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long porch running two-thirds the length of the house, which further served to tie the two sections together. The second floor was turned into servants quarters, and were therefore unadorned and bleak. The west wall, which became the rear, was substantially removed as that portion of the house was enlarged to provide up-dated kitchen space, a rear porch and a servants' stair in keeping with the practice of class segregation. The north end was opened to provide communication with the Italianate addition. Sometime during the 1890s Seymour built a wood porch with porticoes from the entries at the south end of the south wing and from the Italianate addition.

The axis of the Italianate addition is perpendicular to the Noble House with a hipped roof facing east to Newark Avenue. The two-story addition has a fairly typical Italianate floor plan: a side entry hall with a stair, a doorway (to the left) leading to the large dining room in the south wing (the former Noble house), a doorway (to the right) leading to a front parlor and rear parlor and a doorway (at the rear) to Thomas Seymour's library, which is oddly decorated with a metal ceiling. Archways connected the entry hall to the front parlor and the front parlor with the rear parlor, all of which were trimmed out in heavy moldings that matched the baseboards

The second floor is simply a series of bedrooms around the stair hall. There was, however, a connecting door and an odd set of back stairs providing access to the first floor kitchen area and second floor servants' quarters. As is typical, the materials found on the second floor—flooring, wood trim, window casings, etc.—are of a quality lesser than the first floor.

#### CRIPPEN HOUSE

After the Crippen family moved into the house in 1916, they did little to it until the early-1920s, after which time they did a great deal to it. They started by replacing the summer kitchen with a square bay window, then moving the library and rear parlor walls to make those rooms smaller. During the Depression they divided the house north and south to make two separate residences (and two separate addresses). This involved adding a kitchen, bathroom and stairway in the south wing and creating a entry foyer at the south end. As part of the Depression era changes in 1937-1938 the Crippens converted the third floor attic in the Italianate wing to an office for their manufacturing company and the south end of the basement to an informal den or recreation room while modernizing what was left of Noble's fireplace. In addition they changed the roof of the Italianate section from hipped to a front-facing gable. On the south wing, paired rectangular windows projecting upward through the eave, ending in gabled dormers, replaced the round-arched windows.

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PRESENT APPEARANCE

The Norwood Park Historical Society, the owner of the property since 1988, undertook a substantial restoration project from 1998 to 2000. The goal was to return the house to its appearance in 1920, a period that captured the house in a way that most represented the occupancies of its three principal owners. Prior to construction D.A.K. & Associates, the principal architect, enlisted the support of the historical society to obtain whatever information was available about the house in photographs, oral histories and pertinent documents in their collections. Additional investigations, generally more structural in nature, were provided by Archaeological Research, Incorporated, Wiss, Janney and Elstner, and Robert Furhoff to determine when and how the house was constructed.

Exterior

The overall style of the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House is Italianate. It is comprised of a two-story section on the north and a lower, one and a half-story section on the south. The reconstructed one story summer kitchen with a hipped roof is attached to the south end of the south section. There is a newly constructed enclosed rear porch.

The roofs are hipped and covered with asphalt shingle. There is a central chimney on the south wing and one on the north side of the north wing. The north wing also has a dormer in the rear that is a reconstruction.

Most of the windows in the two-story Italianate wing are made of elongated, two-over-four, double-hung sash with lintels. Twelve of the thirteen windows of this type are original to 1868. The one reconstructed window is in the rear, where it replaces a door installed in the 1930s, thereby returning that portion of the house to its 1920s appearance. The second floor windows in the south wing have been returned to their earlier appearance by installing new round-arched windows and putting the eaves back where they belonged. The walk-through casements below them have been retained and repaired. The windows on the new rear porch and kitchen areas and the windows in the reconstructed summer kitchen are newly made replacements. The main front entrance door, which is in the north wing, is original to 1868, while the front entrance into the south wing is waiting for a period reproduction replacement door, since the earlier doors are gone. The north wall of the north wing retains its symmetrical pattern of four original windows. The west wall of the north wing also retains its four-window symmetry; three of the four windows are original, as mentioned above.

The front porch rested originally on piers but rests now on a solid concrete foundation wall that created new basement space to accommodate and protect the curved brick wall in front of the early basement entrances. The porch roof projecting from the north main front entrance, with its two

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supporting columns, gable roof, fan pediment and finely-turned spindles and columns are original, while the identical porch roof over the south front entrance is a reproduction.

The brick foundations are original, except where portions, principally along the north, have failed and been replaced.

A comprehensive paint analysis determined the exterior paint scheme of off-white with green and brown hues for accentuating details in the frieze and shutters.

#### Interior

The restoration recaptures the early 1920s floor plan, and generally succeeded. On the first floor, the parlor and library walls were moved to their original locations; the 1930s stairway in the south wing was removed and the original doorways were restored. Moving walls required losing old plaster, but old plaster was saved wherever possible throughout the house. The opening to the reconstructed summer kitchen, however, is wider than the original in order to accommodate current meeting and event functions. While original wood trim has been retained, not enough remained to complete every part of each room. Trim is reproduced and installed as funds become available.

The first floor kitchen space and rear porch—which is to say, the entire southwest area of the first floor—was removed because the space became obsolete, altered time and again, deteriorated and generally unsuitable for current uses. Although the back stairway has been reconstructed in its original location, everything in the southwest part of the house—the kitchen, closets, storage facilities, rear entry, handicapped accessible toilet rooms and wheelchair ramp—is a product of the 1998-2000 restoration, while the exterior is a reconstruction of the 1920s appearance. All mechanical systems, including a sprinkler system, were installed in order to meet current safety codes and to operate the building efficiently as a museum.

Little was done to the second floor except installing a new kitchen and bathroom in existing spaces in the south wing. The 1930s stairs were eliminated and access to the second floor returned to its 1868 location. The second floor of the south wing is used as a residence.

The Crippens converted the attic in the Italianate wing to office space with 1930s knotty pine panelling. The space remains untouched except for the reduction of ceiling height at the east end of the room where the roof hip was reconstructed and an increase in ceiling height at the west end of the room where a dormer was reconstructed. The room functions as the archive and research facility for the Norwood Park Historical Society.

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NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

There are two anachronistic garages at the rear of the property that have no significance. There is a two-car garage built in the early 1960s and a three-car garage dating from the 1930s or 1940s. The latter is in fair condition and used for equipment storage.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Noble-Seymour-Crippen House meets National Register Criteria A and B in the area of Exploration/Settlement for the role played by Mark Noble, Sr. in constructing the house and occupying it from 1833 to 1839 while playing a significant role as an early settler and entrepreneur in the creation of a permanent community. The part of the house built by Noble is the oldest house within the present city limits of Chicago. The property is also significant under Criterion B for the role played by Thomas Seymour in creating, developing and leading the picturesque suburban community of Norwood Park during his residency from 1868 to his death in 1915. The house is also significant under Criterion B for the social contributions made to the community by Stuart and Charlotte Crippen and their family from the time they acquired the property in 1916 until 1920. The Crippens owned and operated the L.B. Allen Company, which produced industrial and commercial solders and glues and was an important employer in the community.

MARK NOBLE FAMILY

Mark Noble and his small family arrived in Chicago in 1831 from England via the Great Lakes route. His elder son John preceded him in a two-year-long investigation that took him up the Mississippi Valley from New Orleans to St. Louis to Springfield and back to England to collect the family for emigration to Morgan County in central Illinois. Mark Noble, Sr. arrived in Chicago with his wife, son Mark, Jr. and two daughters and decided to settle there. The Nobles lodged with John Kinzie during the winter of 1831-32, but in spring, 1832, Mark, Sr. bought four acres of land bordered by State Street on the west and Madison Street on the south, Lake Michigan on the east and the Chicago River on the north, land which is now a substantial portion of the Chicago Loop. The bawdy and undisciplined lifestyle of the early frontier settlement offended Noble's ardent Methodism. His discouragement with unsuccessful attempts to organize church meetings also prompted him to sell his land and relocate in August 1833.<sup>1</sup>

Moving further north and west he purchased the 160-acre claim of Jean Mirandeau and soon assembled almost 600 acres between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines River. He erected the frame dwelling in 1833 (and completed in 1834) that was to become the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House. The land between the rivers is a flat ridge upon which several sharper sandy ridges occur. Noble built his house at the top of one of these ridges to take advantage of breezes and to provide a commanding view of all the land to the east.

Noble was not a subsistence farmer. He apparently arrived in the United States with enough capital to acquire a substantial landholding and launch several entrepreneurial activities. The family most likely cultivated a garden for home consumption and may have planted fruit trees along the sandy

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ridge, but the mixed hardwood trees and scrub on his property offered more opportunity for pasturage and raw material for a saw mill than it did for crop farming. Thus did Noble make his living through stock raising, land sales and part ownership in a saw mill, which was located on the Des Plaines River near Lake Street in the present town of River Forest.<sup>2</sup> Noble's occupation of the site can be seen more as the nucleus of a settlement rather than the establishment of one of a few scattered early farms. His economic activities were more metropolitan than rural as evidenced by his listing in Fergus' 1839 Chicago directory as a real estate agent.<sup>3</sup> Noble was not among those on the leading edge of settlement who dwelt temporarily on their claim and then moved on. Nor was his establishment on the ridge between the rivers a simple subsistence farm. Rather, he was the first of those who came to stay and build a durable community bound together with ties of economic and social institutions.

Noble was one of the earliest permanent settlers in what was then Jefferson Township. He arrived only after the John Kinzie Clark family. By 1835 there were still only six families dwelling in the township, but by 1838 that number jumped to approximately twenty-five families.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Oldest House in Chicago

When Mark Noble built his house it was located eleven miles from the Chicago boundary. Urban growth and annexations to the City of Chicago proceeded apace throughout the nineteenth century. The city annexed Norwood Park and the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House in 1893. There is no known structure within the city limits of Chicago older than that portion of the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House built by Mark Noble in 1833. The next oldest building in the city is the Henry B. Clarke House located at present at 1855 South Indiana in the Prairie Avenue Historic District. The Clarke House was probably built in 1837 and moved twice. The Clarke House is larger and more imposing, built in the Greek Revival style. The Commission on Chicago Landmarks' report on the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House concludes that no older building exists within the city limits. In 1988 the city of Chicago designated the property a landmark on the basis of its being the oldest building in the city.<sup>5</sup>

Land records indicate positively that Noble bought the property in 1833. Sources claim that Noble began construction of the house late in 1833 and completed it in 1834. His son, John, attests that the house had been erected and occupied by 1834. It is possible that the Noble family built a temporary shelter to see them through their first winter at the site, which was typical behavior for early settlers. Since Noble apparently possessed ample cash and since he was apparently involved in the lumber trade, it is also possible that he could have built the frame house immediately upon his arrival in the neighborhood. Neither literature search nor archaeological search revealed conclusive evidence about either date as the exact date of construction.<sup>6</sup>

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After the Noble Family

Mark, Sr. lived in the house until he died in 1839. His son Mark, Jr. lived there until he moved to Madison, Wisconsin, and later to Texas where he died in 1863. One daughter married a neighbor, later moving to England. The second daughter also married locally, but died in 1847. John Noble removed to the village of Lakeview in 1846 when his widowed mother Margaret, faced with bankruptcy, sold the property to their neighbor James Hill.<sup>7</sup> In 1849 Hill sold the property to Edward Brown who used the building as a farmhouse. Brown may have built a barn near the house, but neither archives nor the soil have yielded any information about it. Brown sold out to Thomas Hartley Seymour in 1868 and the property entered a new epoch, transformed from a farmhouse into a suburban residence.<sup>8</sup>

THOMAS HARTLEY SEYMOUR FAMILY

By the early 1850s Talcott Road, which ran along the northern portion of the property, was improved to provide better access to Chicago. In 1853 the Illinois & Wisconsin Railway (later to become the Chicago & North Western Railway) started operation and primed the region northwest of Chicago for suburban development.<sup>9</sup> In 1868 the newly formed Norwood Land and Building Association purchased 860 acres of land between what are now named Nagle and Harlem Avenues and from Bryn Mawr Avenue north to the village limit of Niles. The village took its name from the title of Henry Ward Beecher's novel, *Norwood, or Village Life in New England*. The word Park was added to distinguish it from another community in the western part of the state.<sup>10</sup>

The development company platted the tract to create a picturesque suburban village connected to Chicago by railroad. The curving streets, parks and school lots, whose center was the commuter railroad station and surrounding commercial node, purposefully set the community apart from the unrelenting street grid and attendant urban problems. Like other picturesque suburbs, the dwellings and curving streets were meant to define that which was clearly non-urban. Sale of liquor in Norwood Park was prohibited by covenant. Norwood Park was identical to other suburbs in purpose. In design it was similar to Riverside, which was also established in 1868 a few miles to the south.<sup>11</sup>

Thomas Seymour participated in the creation and development of Norwood Park and served as a community leader throughout his residence there, earning the sobriquet "Father of Norwood Park." He served as president of the Norwood Land and Building Association when the village was platted. Seymour moved from the state of New York to Chicago in 1854 at the age of nineteen. In Chicago he found work as a freight agent for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad until 1860. Subsequently he achieved success in the commission and brokerage business, having acquired a seat on

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the Board of Trade where he eventually became a director. He was also a director of the Fifth National Bank of Chicago and a member of the Board of Appeals for the inspection of grain. He purchased sixty-five acres in Norwood Park in 1868, making him the largest property owner in the village. He used his land to breed shorthorn cattle and to cultivate cherries, apples and grapes.<sup>12</sup>

Seymour's prominence in the community went beyond his economic presence to political leadership. In addition to presidency of the land association, he held locally influential positions in the community's formative years as township commissioner, postmaster, school board member and president of the village Board of Trustees. At the time it was platted, Norwood Park lay in parts of Jefferson and Leyden Townships in Cook County. The developers of the nascent village were not satisfied with the treatment they received as newcomers at the hands of the local political establishment, especially for the construction and maintenance of roads and the distribution of local tax revenues. As a result, the Norwood Park leaders obtained approval from the Cook County Board of Commissioners in 1873 to separate from the two recalcitrant townships. They then contrived to have one of their number, George Dunlap (who was the village's first resident and a leader of the secession movement), elected to the Illinois General Assembly where he succeeded in obtaining the passage of legislation creating Norwood Park Township in March, 1874. The new township gave Seymour and other community founders the opportunity to gain control of the local political machinery for the benefit of Norwood Park's burgeoning population.<sup>13</sup>

Seymour created and purchased the largest parcel in the village plat; the parcel was so large that it interrupted the street pattern. Mark Noble's house was right in the middle of it; Seymour kept the house but greatly enlarged it with a two-story Italianate addition. Noble built his house on the highest point of ground in the vicinity so it is easy to assume that Seymour chose that spot for the same reason. However, there is no record to indicate why Seymour did not demolish the smaller house and build anew. Although Norwood Park was planned as a middle-class railroad suburb, the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House stands apart from its neighbors, distinguished by its prominence and lot size, appearing more as a country estate than a suburban residence.<sup>14</sup> The Noble-Seymour-Crippen House and its lot is larger than all the rest. It is also the oldest home in the community, even in its 1868 form.

Seymour subdivided and sold off a substantial portion of his property in a plat entitled Seymour Heights shortly before his death in December, 1915, retaining the lots around his home. At the time of his death he owned over thirty properties, mostly residential and mostly in Chicago and Cicero. There were also some in downstate Illinois and in Texas. The sale of lots provided his widow with ample funds for the remainder of her life and the opportunity to sell the house to the first new owner in forty-seven years. In 1916 title to the house and lots passed to Stuart Crippen.<sup>15</sup>



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STUART SAMUEL CRIPPEN FAMILY

The character of Norwood Park changed dramatically during the decades of the Seymour family's occupation of the property. Between 1858 and 1916 population grew from just a few original families to over ten thousand. The 1871 Chicago Fire spurred growth in the brand-new community. Annexation to the City of Chicago in 1893 allowed city services to enter the community, which provided a further impetus for growth.<sup>16</sup> There were further annexations in the 1920s and continued growth through the 1960s when the population leveled off at a little over 40,000. Even so, the community retained its suburban character of single-family detached housing and irregular street pattern. Commercial development remained limited to the north side of the rail corridor at the community's northern edge.<sup>17</sup>

Two generations of the Crippen family would occupy the house for seventy-one years after purchasing the house in 1916, until selling it to the Norwood Park Historical Society in 1987. Stuart and Charlotte Crippen immediately became prominent citizens and exercised an important role in the community's social and economic life. They held theatricals and concerts in the house and used the property for early meetings when they helped found the Norwood Park Baptist Church. The second generation of Crippens assumed similar roles of community leadership in fundraising for community activities and improvements such as Resurrection Hospital. During World War II they helped organize bond drives, one of which financed the outfitting of a hospital airplane named "The Spirit of Norwood Park."<sup>18</sup>

Crippen bought fifteen Seymour lots, including the house and the entire block bordered by Newark, Bryn Mawr, Newcastle Avenue and Hurlbut Avenue. He also purchased additional land to the south where the Kennedy Expressway now runs. The Crippens lived in Evanston at the time of the purchase and used the house in Norwood Park only as a summer home for the first two or three years of their ownership. When they established year-round residency in 1919 or 1920, they decided to move their business to Norwood Park.<sup>19</sup> Towards the end of the Crippen family's tenure, Stuart and Charlotte and later their children, sold off parcels of land. New houses were built on parcels sold on Newark Avenue to the north as early as the late 1920s. In the 1930s and 1940s houses were built on parcels sold off along Newcastle Avenue. During the 1950s, new houses were built on Bryn Mawr Avenue to separate their house from the new expressway.<sup>20</sup> The family retained the last four lots until selling them to the Norwood Park Historical Society.

L. B. ALLEN COMPANY

Another significant element in the history of the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House is the L.B. Allen Company, a producer of solder fluxes and glues for retail and industrial uses. Leonard B. Allen

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developed and patented the “soldering stick,” a flux. Flux is an essential cleaning and etching preparation required for successful soldering. Most fluxes are in liquid or paste form, but since the “stick” was neither, it could be used in difficult places, such as at the top of utility poles by electrical workers. Family memory maintains that Leonard Allen invented the soldering stick and began the company in his basement or garage around 1893. He added other specialty fluxes, solder and soldering supplies to his product line and was able to move into larger facilities at 4519-4529 North Lincoln Avenue in Chicago. Leonard Allen died in 1917 and left his business to his sister Charlotte, wife of Stuart Crippen.

Stuart Crippen held the position of Secretary-Treasurer in the L.B. Allen Company, but Charlotte was the driving force in the business and controlled all the assets until her death in 1933.<sup>21</sup> The company developed into a vibrant local business. Stuart Jr. joined the firm after his graduation from Northwestern University, and soon a new plant was constructed in 1927 at 6719 Bryn Mawr Avenue, just across the street from their home. By this time L.B. Allen Company, which began referring to itself as manufacturing chemists, was more important than just a supplier of soldering supplies; it was producing various types of glue, drain pipe cleaners, household cleaners, glass cleaners and more.

After the relocation of the manufacturing plant to Norwood Park in 1927, the Crippen’s walked to work along a path they created from their house to the plant at the edge of their property to the south. The house itself served for administrative and business functions where office space was created eventually in the third floor attic. The Crippens also undertook research and development projects in their home. One interesting story involves the manufacture of one particular type of glue they produced. The facility, actually a shed, where they made the product, was located on the property just to the south of the house. Manufacture involved celluloid film and solvent that were stored in drums before mixing in vats. One day the shed caught fire and drums of solvent exploded. Subsequently the L.B. Allen Company abandoned production of its own glues.<sup>22</sup>

The company managed to survive the Depression and experienced significant growth during and after World War II. Production expanded even though the roster of employees generally never exceeded twenty-five. They were among the earliest industrial employees to benefit from health insurance, pension plans and profit sharing. They produced proprietary items for industrial and household uses including solder flux (in stick, liquid and paste form), solder and several types of metal and household cleaners under the company name. They also manufactured and packaged the products of other companies, including Sears-Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Jewel-Tea, Schwinn Bicycle, Borden, Stanley Home Products, Best Hardware, Ace Hardware, Magnavox and Raytheon. Elmer’s Glue is probably their best-known product. Other customers bought up their glues, auto body solder and cleaners for drains, septic systems and sewers.<sup>23</sup>

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Three of the Crippen's four children entered the family business, but not until they were graduated from college and served apprenticeships as salaried employees. After Charlotte's death, Stuart, Jr. headed finance and administration, Paul handled production and John was in charge of sales. Stuart Crippen, Sr. died in 1950. In 1956 L.B. Allen Company moved to 9329 Bernice Street in Schiller Park, when its site on Bryn Mawr was relinquished for the Kennedy Expressway. In 1972 the surviving Crippen sold the business, and it remains in operation at Harvard, Illinois.<sup>24</sup>

The Crippens and their company are important in the history of Norwood Park for their social and economic prominence in the community. The company's products, which were developed and manufactured on the property, were important to a larger community as well.

**NORWOOD PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In 1987 the Crippen family sold the house and four lots remaining from the land settled by Mark Noble, developed into a suburban village by Thomas Seymour, and maintained as a community focal point by Stuart and Charlotte Crippen (and their family). Since then the historical society has been operating the property as a house museum, neighborhood archive, and community activity center, thereby continuing its prominence and, in a sense, its function.

Between 1998 and 2000 the historical society undertook a substantial rehabilitation, described in Section 7, to restore deteriorated and missing features, to preserve it for future use and to make it more usable for the community. They selected 1920 as their period of interpretation since that year represent the pinnacle of the property's prominence while illustrating the contributions of its three most famous families. The house appears today as it did in 1920, while the Crippen family occupied it.

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Noble-Seymour-Crippen House is important for being the oldest building in the City of Chicago and is significant for Mark Noble, Sr.'s role in early settlement. Thomas Seymour is important for his leadership in developing Norwood Park into a suburban village and providing leadership during

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its early years before annexation to Chicago. Stuart and Charlotte Crippen are important for bringing the L.B. Allen Company to the community and playing an important role in the development of the community's social and economic life.

<sup>1</sup> A.T. Andreas, *History of Cook County Illinois*, (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, Publisher, 1884) 235, 745, (Hereafter cited as Andreas); Weston Goodspeed and Daniel Healy, *History of Cook County Illinois*, (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, 1909) Vol. II, 286 (Hereafter cited as Goodspeed); Anne Lunde, "Mark Noble was Norwood Park's first pioneer settler in 1833," [Norwood Park] *Review*, July 21, 1983, clipping in Norwood Park Historical Society archives. This is a credible article published in a neighborhood newspaper researched at the Chicago Historical Society using scrapbooks, land records and published sources. For lifestyle in Chicago as a frontier village before 1833 see Donald L. Miller, *City of the century*, (New York: Touchstone, 1997) Chapter 2, "Didn't expect no town," 48-65.

<sup>2</sup> Archaeological Research, Inc. "Noble-Seymour-Crippen house historical and archaeological research: final findings and recommendations," 11, report dated February 19, 1999 in Norwood Park Historical Society archives (Hereafter cited as ARI); Lunde, *op. cit.* Lunde estimates that Mark Noble arrived in the United States with \$8,000. It is possible that the site attracted Noble for its proximity to the Native American residents north of the nearby Indian Boundary Line of 1816. The area that was to become Norwood Park may have been the site of an alternative to the Mud Lake portage that could have been used during especially wet seasons, a fact that would have been significant in light of Noble's planned entrepreneurial career. (See John F. Steward, "Chicago—origin of the name of the city and the old portages," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1904), 460-466.

<sup>3</sup> ARI, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Goodspeed, 286.

<sup>5</sup> Commission on Chicago Landmarks, "Noble-Seymour-Crippen House, preliminary staff survey of information," report dated July, 1987 (Hereafter cited as CCL); Joan Pomaranc to City Clerk Walter Kozubowski, May 11, 1988 and Commission on Chicago Landmarks to Norwood Park Historical Society, May 11, 1988, Noble-Seymour-Crippen House-Correspondence file, Commission on Chicago Landmarks archives. For the act of designation see *Journal of the proceedings of the City Council*, 13106-13108.

<sup>6</sup> ARI, *passim*; Andreas, *op. cit.*; Goodspeed, 286.

<sup>7</sup> Andreas, 745, 748; Goodspeed, 304-305.

<sup>8</sup> ARI, 7-9; Lunde, *op. cit.* Both researchers used land and probate records to identify a chain of title.

<sup>9</sup> Newton Bateman and Paul Selby (eds.), *Historical encyclopedia of Illinois and Cook County*, (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1905), 405.

<sup>10</sup> William D. Barge and Norman Caldwell, "Illinois place-names," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (October, 1936), 263.

<sup>11</sup> Chicago Fact Book Consortium, *Local community fact book, Chicago metropolitan area*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Department of Sociology, 1984), 26 (Hereafter cited as *Community fact book*). Although Olmsted and Vaux's village of Riverside was under development at the same time and just a few miles south along the same thoroughfare (Harlem or 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue), research into Olmsted's career reveals no connection between Riverside and Norwood Park. Promotional literature published by the Norwood Park Improvement Club in 1907 asserts that

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the suburb "was originally laid out by the noted landscape gardener for the World's Columbian Exposition," but the name of the individual (and the veracity of the claim) eludes confirmation.

<sup>12</sup> *Community fact book*, 26; Andreas, 488; CCL, 2; Norwood Park Improvement Club, *Norwood Park the ideal suburb* (Chicago: Norwood Press, 1907), [18].

<sup>13</sup> Andreas, 478-480, 486; Goodspeed, 305.

<sup>14</sup> ARI, 6.

<sup>15</sup> ARI, 7; Copy of trust deed in Noble-Seymour-Crippen House correspondence file, Commission on Chicago Landmarks archives.

<sup>16</sup> *Community fact book*, 26-27.

<sup>17</sup> CCL, p. 4. It is interesting to note, as the Chicago landmarks commission points out, that the 1907 promotional brochure refers to Norwood Park as "the ideal suburb," over a decade after annexation to Chicago.

<sup>18</sup> CCL, 3; Norwood Park Baptist Church, *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*, Norwood Park Baptist Church, 1971, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Crippen Howard interview with Thomas Spenny and Susan Kroll, March 2, 1986, Norwood Park Historical Society archives. Margaret Crippen Howard was the daughter of Stuart and Charlotte Allen Crippen.

<sup>20</sup> "Stuart and Agnes Crippen House," collected in interpretive material, Norwood Park Historical Society.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Stuart Crippen, Jr., to Wehner Insurance Company, January 22, 1965, Unmarked (Crippen?) file, Norwood Park Historical Society archives; letter from Harvey A. Crippen to Theodore Hild, April 1, 1999, Noble-Seymour-Crippen House file, Preservation Services Division, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; Margaret Crippen interview. Harvey Crippen is the grandson of Stuart and Charlotte Crippen.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

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Noble-Seymour-Crippen House

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 36, 37, 38, 39 and north 10 feet of Lot 40 in Seymour Heights Subdivision, W ½, SE ¼  
Section 6, Township 40 North, Range 13 East

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the property owned by the Norwood Park Historical Society. It includes the house constructed by Mark Noble and the land associated with that house remaining from Mark Noble's original holding.

JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY EXPRESSWAY

W. BRYN MAWR

AVE.

N. NEWCASTLE

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MAP 2

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W. HURL

NOBLE-SEYMOUR-  
CRIPPEN HOUSE

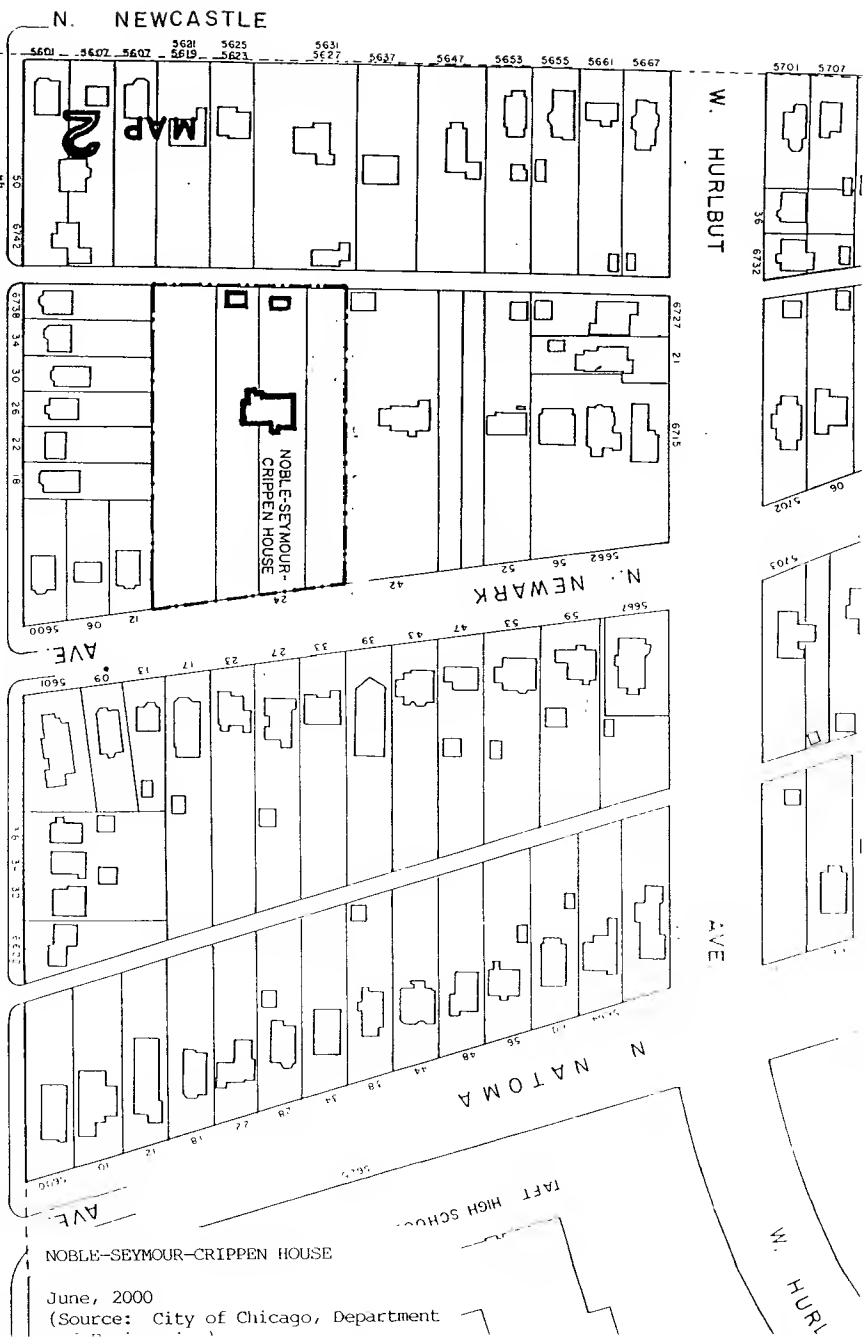
N. NEWARK

N. NATOMA

TAFT HIGH SCHOOL

NOBLE-SEYMOUR-CRIPPEN HOUSE

June, 2000  
(Source: City of Chicago, Department

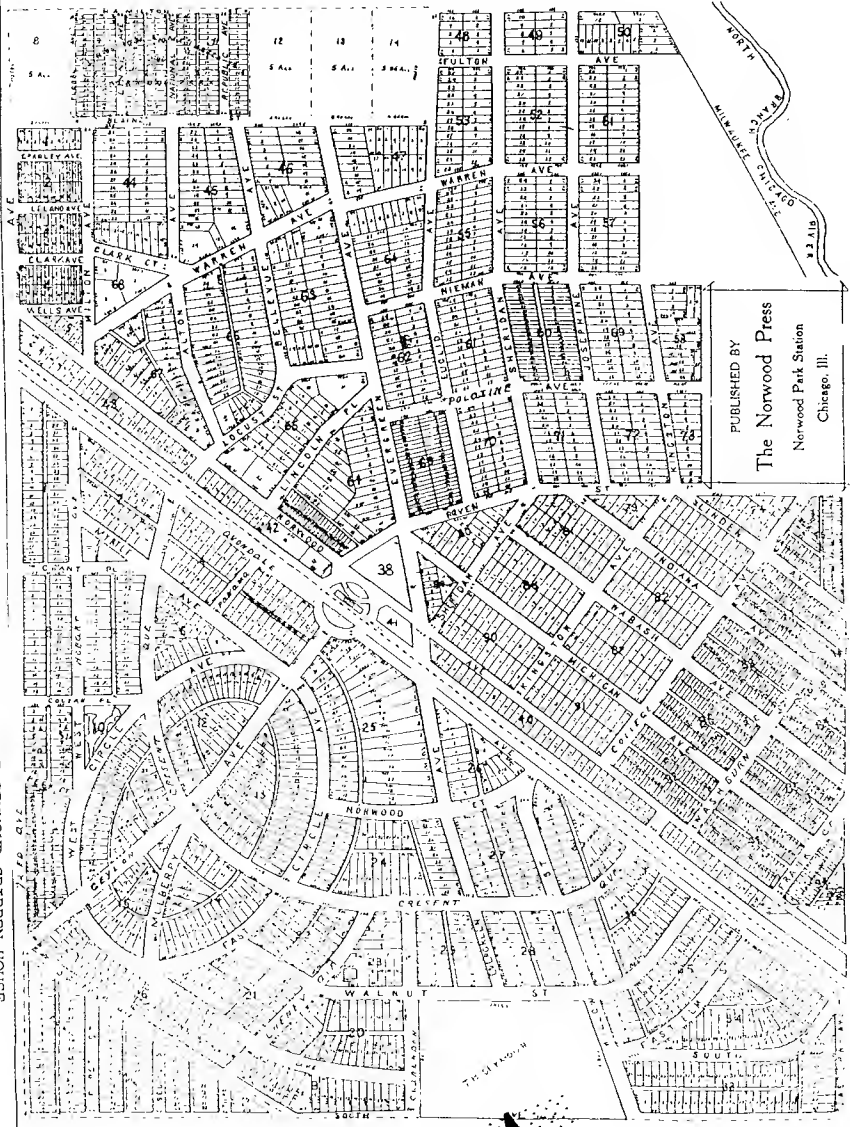






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COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

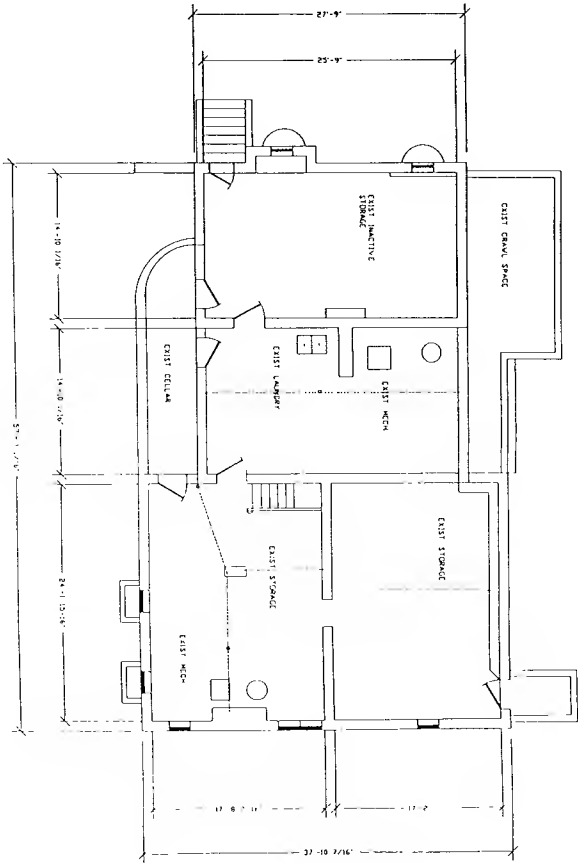


PUBLISHED BY  
**The Norwood Press**  
Newwood Park Station  
Chicago, Ill.

NOBLE-SEYMOUR-CRIPPEN HOUSE

Plat of Norwood Park, 1907

(Source: Norwood Park Improvement Club, Norwood Park, the Ideal Suburb (Chicago: Norwood Press, 1907).)



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

Ca. 1850-1898



A-2

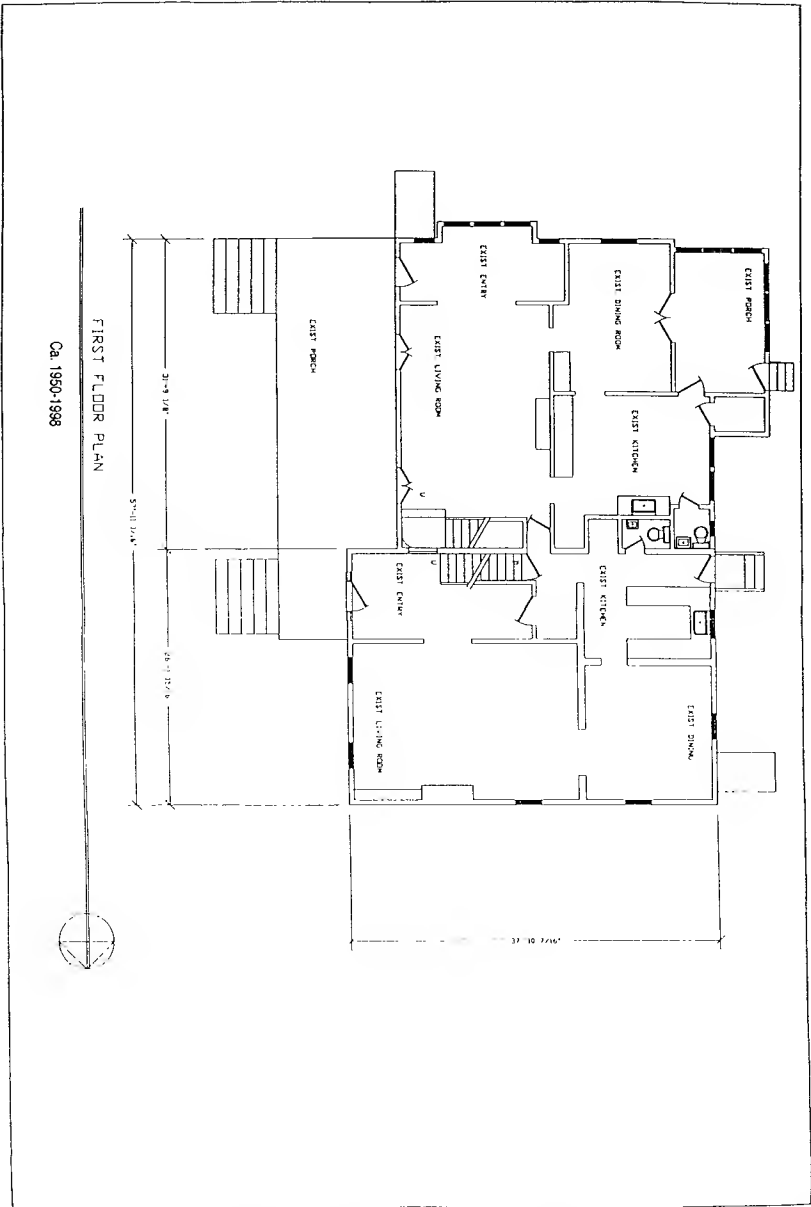
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NOBLE/SEYMOUR/CRIPPEN  
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CHICAGO ILLINOIS

DAK & ASSOCIATES

CHICAGO ILLINOIS  
773-775-8252 DAN BURKIN ARCH

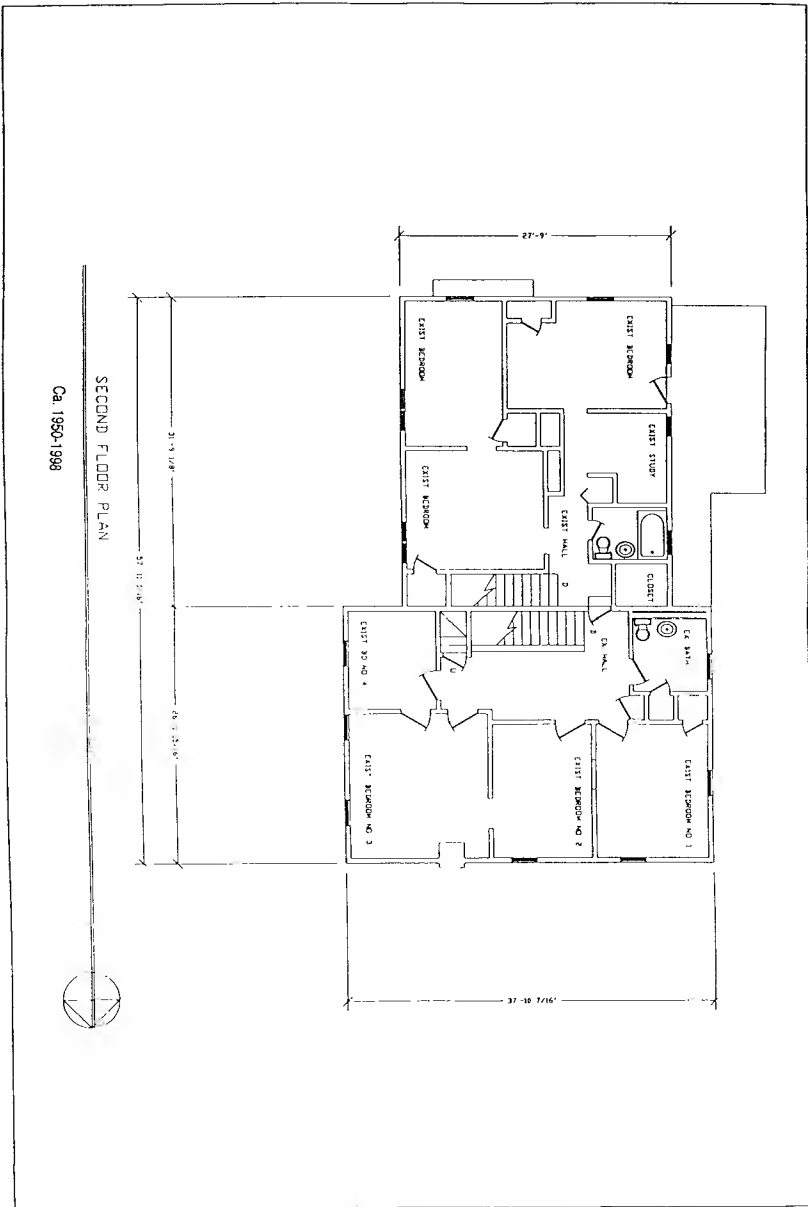
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Ca. 1950-1998

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
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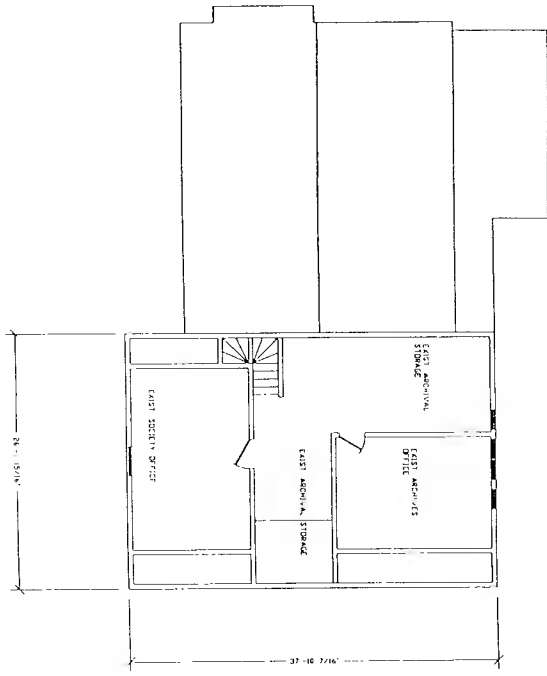
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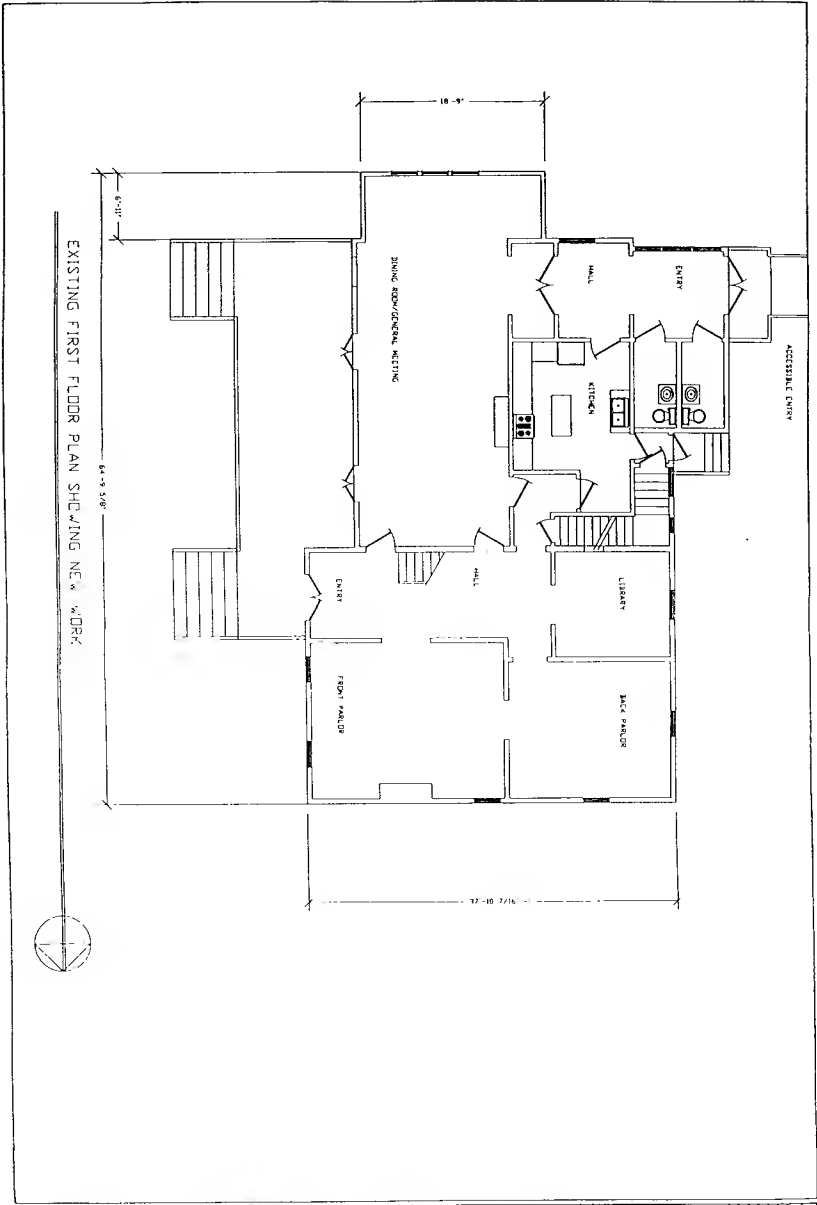
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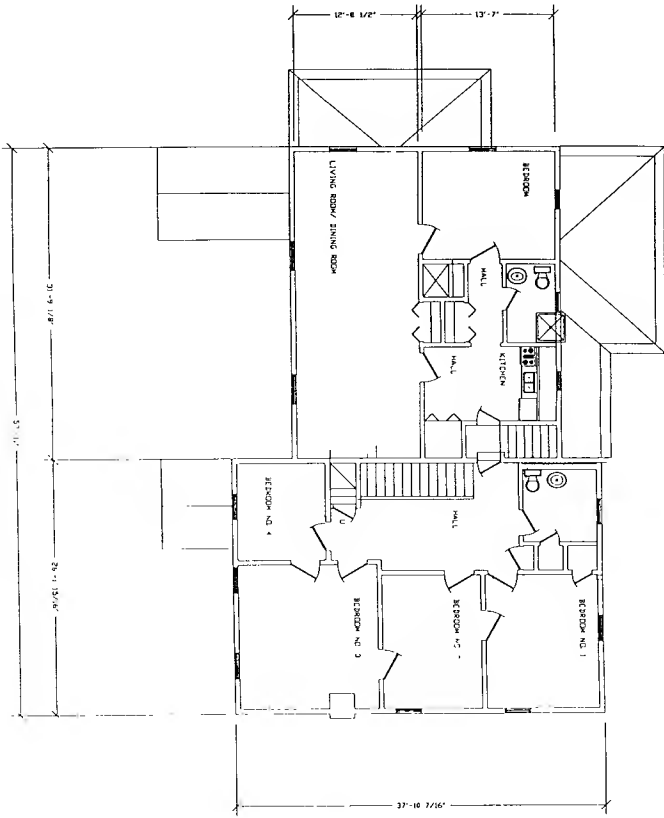
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WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 8/07/00 THROUGH 8/11/00

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

ALASKA, YUKON-KOYUKUK BOROUGH-CENSUS AREA, Taylor, James, Cabins, Right bank of the Yukon opposite Fourth of July Creek, Eagle vicinity, 87001203, REMOVED, 8/07/00 (Yukon River Lifeways TR)

CALIFORNIA, MONTEREY COUNTY, Steinbeck, John, House, 132 Central Ave., Salinas, 00000856, LISTED, 8/08/00

COLORADO, LARIMER COUNTY, First National Bank Building, 3728 Cleveland Ave., Wellington, 00000937, LISTED, 8/10/00

CONNECTICUT, LITCHFIELD COUNTY, Rye House, 122-132 Old Mount Tom Rd., Litchfield, 00000940, LISTED, 8/10/00

FLORIDA, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, St. Anastasia Catholic School, Old, 910 Orange Ave., Fort Pierce, 00000941, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, Library--University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1408 W. Gregory Dr., Urbana, 00000413, LISTED, 8/11/00 (University of Illinois Buildings designed by Charles A. Platt MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Buckingham Building, 59-67 E. Van Buren St., Chicago, 00000942, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Moile--Seymour--Crippen House, 5622-5624 N. Newark Ave., Chicago, 00000950, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Leonard, Clifford Milton, Farm, Hathaway Circle, Lake Forest, 00000944, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Morse, Robert Homer, House, 1301 Knollwood Circle, Lake Forest, 00000947, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, PERRY COUNTY, Perry County Jail, 108 W. Jackson St., Pinckneyville, 00000943, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, SANGAMON COUNTY, Bretz, John F., House and Warehouse, 113 N. Fifth St., Springfield, 00000945, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, WINNEBAGO COUNTY, Brown, William, Building, 226-228 S. Main St., Rockford, 00000946, LISTED, 8/10/00

ILLINOIS, WINNEBAGO COUNTY, Illinois National Guard Armory, 605 N. Main St., Rockford, 00000948, LISTED, 8/10/00

IOWA, CEDAR COUNTY, Kreinbring Phillips 66 Gas Station, 200 Main St., Lowden, 00000933, LISTED, 8/10/00

IOWA, LINN COUNTY, Second and Third Avenue Historic District, 1400 to 1800 blks of Second Ave. SE and Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 00000926, LISTED, 8/10/00 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa MPS)

IOWA, WAPELLO COUNTY, Dahlonega School #1, Cty. Rd. N25, 2 mi. NE of Ottumwa, Ottumwa vicinity, 00000934, LISTED, 8/10/00

MASSACHUSETTS, ESSEX COUNTY, Rollins, John R., School, 451 Noward St., Lawrence, 00000956, LISTED, 8/10/00

MASSACHUSETTS, NORFOLK COUNTY, Pisner School--High Street Historic District, 748-850; 751-823 High St., Westwood, 00000687, LISTED, 6/30/00

MONTANA, MISSOULA COUNTY, Lenox Plaza, 300-306 West Broadway, Missoula, 00000874, LISTED, 8/08/00 (Missoula MPS)

NEW JERSEY, SOMERSET COUNTY, Nigginsville Road Bridges, Nigginsville Rd. at the South Branch of the Kariton River, Hillsborough vicinity, 00000916, LISTED, 8/10/00 (Metal Truss Bridges in Somerset County MPS)

NEW YORK, RENSSELAER COUNTY, Blink Bonnie, 1368 Sunset Rd., Schodack, 00000958, LISTED, 8/10/00

OHIO, COLUMBIANA COUNTY, Teggarden--Centennial Covered Bridge, Sagleton Rd. T-761, 0.1 mi E of C-411, Salem vicinity, 00000961, LISTED, 8/10/00

OHIO, CUYAHOGA COUNTY, Olmsted Falls Depot, 25802 Garfield Rd., Olmsted Falls, 00000963, LISTED, 8/10/00

OHIO, SUMMIT COUNTY, Northfield Town Hall, 9546 Brandyvine Rd., Northfield, 00000962, LISTED, 8/10/00

PENNSYLVANIA, ERIE COUNTY, Erie Trust Company Building, 1001 State St., Erie, 00000967, LISTED, 8/10/00

PENNSYLVANIA, FULTON COUNTY, Cold Spring Farm, 323 Lions Park Dr., McConnellsburg, Todd, 00000966, LISTED, 8/10/00

PENNSYLVANIA, LANCASTER COUNTY, New Holland Machine Company, 146 B. Franklin St., New Holland, 00000846, LISTED, 8/09/00

PENNSYLVANIA, MERCER COUNTY, Greenville Commercial Historic District, Centered on Main, Canal and Clinton Sts., Greenville, 00000964, LISTED, 8/10/00

PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, Bell Telephone Company Building, 1827-35 Arch St., Philadelphia, 00000849, LISTED, 8/07/00

PENNSYLVANIA, YORK COUNTY, Red Lion Borough Historic District, Roughly bounded by Edgewood Ave., Windsor Twp. line, MD&PA RR, Chestnut Rd., Country Club Rd., and York Twp. line., Red Lion, 00000847, LISTED, 8/10/00

TEXAS, BURNET COUNTY, Briggs State Bank, Loop 308, approx. 0.5 mi. N of jct. with US 183, Briggs, 00000885, LISTED, 8/11/00

WASHINGTON, PERRY COUNTY, Fairweather--Trevitt House, 645 Kaufman, Republic, 00000975, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, KING COUNTY, Colvys Store, 123rd Ave. SW and Cove Rd., Vashon, 00000970, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, KING COUNTY, Skykomish Historic Commercial District, Railroad Ave., from 3rd St. to W of N 6th St., and part of Old Cascade Hwy., Skykomish, 00000974, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, KING COUNTY, Steen, Helmer and Selma, House, 10924 SW Cove Rd., Vashon, 00000976, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, KING COUNTY, Vashon Hardware Store, 17601 99th Ave. SW, Vashon, 00000971, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, SPIRKE COUNTY, Wilkeson Arch, WA 165, Church St. and Briehrial Blvd., Wilkeson, 00000973, LISTED, 8/10/00

WASHINGTON, SPOKANE COUNTY, Bump Block--Bellevue House--Hawthorne Hotel, S 206 Post St., Spokane, 00000977, LISTED, 8/10/00 (Single Room Occupancy Hotel's in the Central Business District of Spokane MPS)

WASHINGTON, SPOKANE COUNTY, Roosevelt Apartments, 524 W. Seventh Ave., Spokane, 00000969, LISTED, 8/10/00

WISCONSIN, OZAUKEE COUNTY, Jahn, William F., Farmstead, 12112-12116 N. Wauwatosa Rd., Mequon, 00000978, LISTED, 8/10/00

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AUG 2 8 2000

Preservation Services

AUG 18 2000